



## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### INFORMATION SERVICE

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

For Release to SUNDAY PAPERS OF MARCH 3, 1946.

Acting Secretary of the Interior Oscar L. Chapman announced today that a four-month field survey of the commercial fishing industry of the Philippine Islands has been undertaken by the Fish and Wildlife Service to determine what equipment, materials, and funds will be needed to restore the fisheries to early production.

The fishing industry of the Philippines, normally one of the chief sources of protein foods in the Islands, was completely destroyed by combat action and by vandalism and confiscation by the Japanese occupation troops, and practically no vessels, fishing gear, or shore facilities remain, Acting Secretary Chapman said.

The survey is being undertaken at the direction of President Truman, who also requested the Secretary of the Navy and the Secretary of War to cooperate by providing assisting personnel from their Departments as well as transportation and other facilities. The survey has also been welcomed by the United States High Commissioner to the Philippines, Paul V. McNutt, and the President of the Philippines, Sergio Osmeña, as promising much needed assistance to the war-torn Islands.

Because of the critical food situation in the Philippines, the immediate restoration of the fisheries to productiveness is regarded as essential. It is believed that this can be accomplished in much less time than will be required to reestablish other sources of protein foods and of adequate agricultural crops.

The survey will be directed by John R. Webster, fishery engineer of the Fish and Wildlife Service. Mr. Webster, together with Boris O. Knake, another of the

Service's fishery engineers, and Lt. (jg) John O'Hara, U.S.N.R., will leave San Francisco via Navy transport plane for Manila March 3. At Manila the party will be joined by assisting personnel and will establish its headquarters on a vessel assigned by the Navy. The vessel will provide transportation to all of the important fishing areas in the Islands.